

# A JOHNSONIAN NEWS LETTER

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With the appearance of the fourth number, your editor wishes to thank once more those who have contributed to its support, with both money and suggestions. Enough of the former has been received to insure the continuance of the project for some time. But news items and queries will be constantly needed if the work is to be really worth while. Keep sending in whatever you may wish to share with other subscribers.

The next issue in June will probably be the last until September. In it we hope to make a definite announcement concerning the program for the Group VIII meeting in Indianapolis in Dec. Any suggestions should be sent immediately to our chairman, W. P. Jones (Western Reserve).

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## MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

Jim Osborn (Yale) has been added to the nominating and advisory committee of Group VIII.

H. P. Vincent (Hillsdale) writes: "May I urge that all those interested in Record Office research write to Percy Long asking for the microfilming of all the indexes and calendars of the Public Record Office. Or, for a minimum, the filming of the Clerks Books of Chancery. This is not just for protection; it will save weeks of work in the future for all scholars intending to work among the records after the war."

Rae Blanchard (Goucher) passes on the information that the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress now has a microfilm of the London Evening Post, from Dec. 1727 to Dec. 1738.

## NEWS FROM ENGLAND

Dr. Johnson used to object to what he called the exaggeration of historians when writing about the horrors of war. They told, said he, "of Consternation filling the Towns and People, when in Truth no one was consternated, but Men minded their Shops and counted their Money, and Women looked to their Crockery Ware & minded their Mops, whether under one form of Government or another." (Quoted in one of Mrs. Piozzi's letters)

It appears that the modern disciples of the Doctor agree with his dictum. Esmond de Beer (the John Evelyn editor) writes of a meeting of the Johnson Club at Brown's Hotel in London on March 27, attended by twenty people, with "a very pre-war meal". Lord Harmsworth gave a report about the damage to the Gough Square House and the installation of a temporary roof. Following this, there was "a delightful paper" by Arundell Esdaile on "Johnson and the Young."

de Beer adds (of course, before the last terrible attack): "Damage in that part of London [about Gough Square] is I believe considerable, without there being anything like a general devastation. ... University College appears to have lost about a quarter of its books; the Guildhall Library has lost a certain quantity, but I think not very serious, except for directories and poll-books. I feel very sad about many of the churches; fortunately the good stone steeples appear to be intact; and St. Paul's has had very little damage (enthusiasts suggest for after the war removal of the very drab mosaic incrustation in the choir and that very uncompanionable reredos)."

The letter ends: "The crocuses are passing, but in their place forsythia, almond trees, and daffodils. Despite Hitler London is not such a bad place to be in."

News of Canterbury comes in a letter from the Mayor of the city to the Chaucer group of the N.L.A. Our readers may be interested in a quotation from the letter: "I would like to assure you that the old City, although badly battered, has not suffered irreparable damage. The Cathedral has not been actually hit, although bomb blasts have broken some considerable portion of unimportant glass. The Deanery, the residences of both Arch-deacons, as well as two or three of the Canons houses have all been very badly bombed, and a group of particularly interesting early 16th Century houses were completely destroyed." The Mayor adds: "It is amazing however, how very determined the people are to show no fear and to permit no slackening of their efforts to secure a lasting peace, based on freedom and right."

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#### QUERY

T. O. Mabbott (Hunter) sends in the following: "From a letter of Thomas Chatterton, July 11, 1770, it seems clear that 'the marvelous boy' had a contribution in the London Christian Magazine for June 1770. No editor or biographer seems to have located a copy of the magazine. I should like to know if any readers of the News Letter can tell us of any surviving copy, as I am trying to glean the fields for uncollected writings of Chatterton." Mabbott adds that there may have been something irregular about the issue of the magazine for this month, but some files should have survived. Occasionally, too, private collectors or small libraries happen to have rare items which cannot be found in the BN or in the American college libraries.

#### AUCTION SALES

What Arthur Swann, of the Parkes-Bernet Galleries, calls the greatest single collection of Johnsoniana ever to be sold at one time in the United States will go under the hammer in New York the afternoon and evening of May 15. Of course, it is a portion of the collection of the late A. Edward Newton. The first part of the sale, through the letter "D", was completed April 16-18, at which time one of the most distinguished audiences ever to pack the 57th st. galleries eagerly bought the Boswell, Burns, and Blake items which were offered.

Undoubtedly a large part of the interest was in the personality of their former owner. The ghost of the "Squire of Oak Knoll" surely moved about the rooms with ill-concealed delight. Many of the purchasers, he must have known, were there merely to secure mementoes from the Newton library; merely to acquire some choice bit long ago described in The Amenities of Book-Collecting or in some Christmas brochure. Thus the high prices possibly represent more a sentimental tribute to the memory of a widely loved man, than any sudden wild burst in collecting.

In the coming sessions, readers of the News Letter will perhaps be most interested in Goldsmith's letter to Garrick about the first performance of *She Stoops to Conquer* (with other Goldsmith items); in Dr. Johnson's tea pot, miscellaneous autograph MSS in his hand, a series of 32 papers having to do with the celebrated Dodd affair, and a long series of letters to Mrs. Thrale. Some of the letters are unpublished. Valuable Keats and Lamb MSS are also included in the sale.

The catalogue of Part II is a handsome one, particularly delightful because of the various comments of the former owner about each item. These personal touches - the final amusing quips from the man who started more eighteenth century collectors than any other



writer -- lend additional color to the material, and make the catalogue itself a collector's desideratum. (priced \$2)

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### PROJECTS

On the subject of revising Crane and Kaye, R. S. Crane (Chicago) writes as follows:

"Some years ago, shortly after Mr. Kaye's death, when I had more time on my hands than now and some money for the purpose, I accumulated a fairly respectable body of notes toward a second and revised edition of the Census. I have never quite given up hope of carrying the revision through; but I am unable to work on it at present, and I therefore welcome Mr. McKillop's suggestion, in the last number of the News Letter, that members of our group might be willing to lend their services toward its completion.

"It is clear, I think, that if a revision is attempted it should be limited to files of periodicals now available in American (including, if possible, Canadian) libraries, and that we should aim at constructing a fuller and more precise inventory of holdings for each periodical than Kaye and I were able to extract from many of the libraries to which we applied.

"I am not clear how far we should go toward constructing a history of each periodical over and above the list of American holdings; that would be desirable, but very difficult, and it might be better to confine our ambitions to making available to American scholars as complete a catalogue as possible of the journals now actually accessible, wholly or in part, in this country. I should be very glad to receive suggestions concerning either ways and means of organizing the preliminary work or methods of procedure."

We hope every reader of this News Letter will seriously consider the above statement, and will write in his opinions. Because of

the war the necessity for a revised Census seems to be even more urgent; but the problem remains as to how it can be done.

E.R.Wasserman (Ill.), who suggested in our last issue, for a group project, the assembling of information about the authorship of unsigned articles in 18th century periodicals, sends in a few examples of what might be done. For instance, the articles in the Monthly Mirror signed "O" are by Octavius Gilchrist; those in the same magazine signed "T.P." are by Thomas Park; and a series of articles in Town and Country Magazine (1788) on the old English poets is taken bodily and without acknowledgment from Henry Headley's Select Beauties of Ancient English Poetry.

Will others who can give similar ascriptions please send them in, with the authorities, for listing in the News Letter.

Philip Gove (N.Y.U.) has another proposal. He writes: "I should like to throw into the ring a suggestion: a list of 18th-century books containing names of subscribers. To my mind that's a perfect group project, to be allowed to grow and grow in the files of a chairman.... I take down a volume to find out what X says about Y and notice that there are 8 pages of subscribers; I make a note of it (as I have been doing for some time) and I'm willing to throw it into a pool so that someone someday can study the whole business as it should be studied; for a lone hunter to start out finding all these volumes would be work out of all proportion to the findings." Do any others of our readers wish to cooperate with Gove in this project?

What can be done by cooperation in scholarship is well exemplified in the Checklist of the Correspondence of Edmund Burke, being

compiled by Milton S. Smith (Box 1566, Yale Station). Beginning with the help of Thomas Copeland (Yale), Smith has since received the full cooperation of two other scholars who have collected extensive information about Burke's correspondence, Dixon Wector (UCLA) and Donald Bryant (Wash. U.). Smith's files now contain data on more than 1,100 letters, a number which compares with 482 in the printed Correspondence. Since more than 300 of Burke's contemporaries are represented, the list should be of great value to scholars working in the later 18th century. Smith will welcome information about any letters, either by Burke himself, or written to him, in manuscript or in print, that readers of this News Letter may chance on in their research. He will be glad to answer queries as far as his files will allow.

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#### REQUESTS

C. T. Houpt (U. of Pa.) writes: "I am working on a critical biography of Mark Akenside, M.D., and will appreciate hearing of any manuscript or other material relating to either his life or his works."

J.T.Parker (U. of Pa.) is engaged in research into the life of William Somerville, author of "The Chase", and friend of Shenstone, Lady Luxborough and others. He would be glad to get in touch with anyone who can aid him in this investigation.

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The first quotation in print from our News Letter appeared in the second volume of the Newton Sale catalogue (p. 130), where the account of the recent damage to the Gough Square Johnson House was described.

Katherine Hornbeak (Smith) sends some corrections and additions to the account of the Montagu MSS in the Huntington Library. The vast collection contains in all about twelve thousand letters, of which about half were written by the "Queen of the Blues" and about half addressed to her. The collection is so far uncatalogued, but most of Mrs. Montagu's letters are arranged chronologically. Since, however, so many are undated, the arrangement is often highly conjectural. About a thousand of her letters are not even included in this tentative chronological arrangement. There is no list of the addresses of Mrs. Montagu's letters; there is, nevertheless, a card index listing more than 250 writers of the letters to Mrs. Montagu.

Many of the letters in the collection have been published - by Matthew Montagu, Emily J. Climençon, and Reginald Blunt. Lord Kames's letters to Mrs. Montagu will appear in a forthcoming work by Helen Randall (Smith).

In spite of the fact that eight volumes of letters have already been quarried from this collection, there is still much of interest and value that has not been published. Katherine Hornbeak herself intends to publish letters which abound in evidence of an increasing social conscience, and those throwing light on Mrs. Montagu's activities and policies in the management of the collieries. (Some papers from the original collection having to do with the business are now in Newcastle-on-Tyne). A section dealing with James Woodhouse and Ann Yearsley has been completed, and one concerning the relations of Mrs. Montagu and Dorothea Gregory is planned.

As previously stated, our chairman, W. P. Jones, has examined the collection for evidences of interest in natural history and science, among other topics. Yet there still remains much to be studied relating to other subjects.